

## **Part I. System Description**

### **Section E**

## **Regional Level**

### **1. Regional Level in SEMS**

Regions are one of the five levels of SEMS organization. A region is a geographical area made up of two or more counties. SEMS guidance for the regional level is primarily but not exclusively directed at regional facilities and systems which administer or coordinate mutual aid. These would include OES regional emergency operations centers (REOCs) and discipline-specific mutual aid systems, for example, fire, law, medical, which coordinate mutual aid within mutual aid regions.

Other state agency administrative and operational sub-levels also have a "regional" structure; for example, CHP Divisions, CALTRANS Districts, and CDF and Fish and Game Regions. The SEMS regulations require that all State agencies must use SEMS. While the guidance is directed primarily at those agencies administering established mutual aid systems, the organization, concepts and principles described in the Guidelines also apply to the "regional" level of other state agencies which are involved in response to emergencies, and are required to use SEMS.

#### **A. Mutual Aid, Mutual Aid Regions and Mutual Aid Systems**

Because of the importance of mutual aid, a brief description is provided of the relationships between California mutual aid systems and regions. A general discussion of mutual aid is described in Guidelines Section I.A. The SEMS Field Level Training Course, Module #18 describes the overall California mutual aid program, and each of the various mutual aid systems in more detail.

#### **Mutual Aid**

The delivery of all mutual aid in California is based on the Master Mutual Aid Agreement. This agreement signed in 1950 by the state and all counties, provides the basis for rendering mutual aid without the necessity of specially written agreements for mutual aid.

Essentially, this agreement states that each party agrees to furnish resources and facilities and to render services to each and every other party to prevent and combat any type of disaster. However, no party is required to unreasonably deplete its own

resources, facilities, and services in the process of furnishing mutual aid.

The use of mutual aid by a local government is determined by the jurisdiction in need. Local governments requiring assistance will request mutual aid from neighboring jurisdictions or through their respective operational area. (A variety of local written and in some cases informal mutual aid agreements exist between jurisdictions.) The operational area (which consists of the county and all political jurisdictions within the county) will coordinate the additional aid requirement first from jurisdictions within the operational area (including county owned resources). (See operational area discussion in Guidelines I.D.)

If sufficient resources are still not available, the request will be made to the regional level. The mutual aid system regional coordinator (which will differ in name and location by mutual aid system), will attempt to fill the resource order from mutual aid suppliers within their region. If sufficient resources are still not available, the request will be forwarded to the state level which will fill the resource request from other mutual aid regions within the state, from interstate sources and/or from private and federal sources.

The regional level coordinates mutual aid information and resources among the operational areas within the region and between the operational areas and the state level. The regional level and the state level coordinate overall state agency support for emergency response activities.

This general process for requesting and supplying mutual aid is shown in Exhibit E-1.

### Mutual Aid Regions

Mutual aid regions are established under the Emergency Services Act by the Governor, who with the advice of the State's Emergency Council is authorized to divide the state into mutual aid regions for the more effective application, administration, and coordination of mutual aid and other emergency related activities. Six mutual aid regions numbered I - VI have been established within California for purposes of coordinating mutual aid between operational areas in the region. Region I is divided into two Regions, Region I and Region IA for Law Enforcement Mutual Aid. Each mutual aid region consists of designated counties. State OES has also established three Administrative Regions which will be discussed below. Mutual Aid and OES Administrative Regions are shown in Exhibit E-2.

Insert

Exhibit E-1

Mutual Aid Ssystem Concept

Illustrator file

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Exhibit E-2

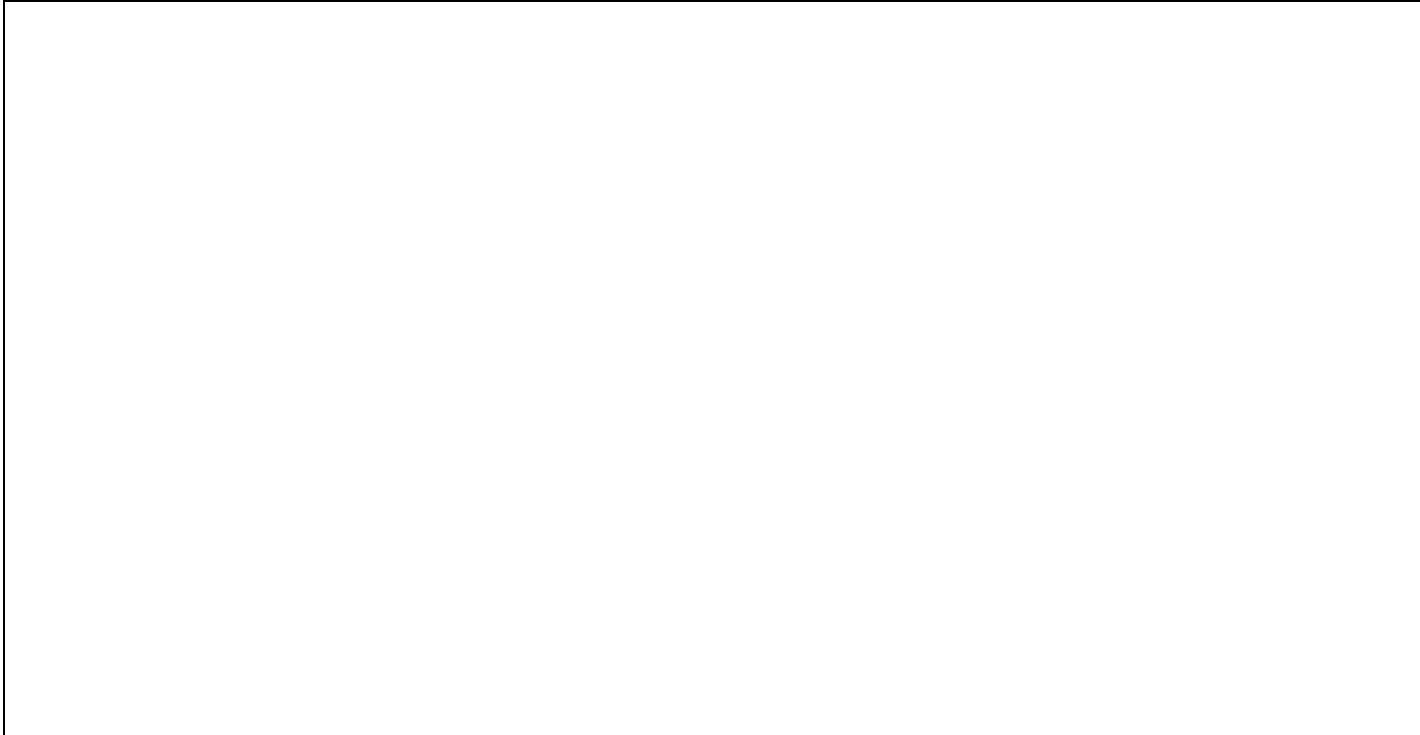
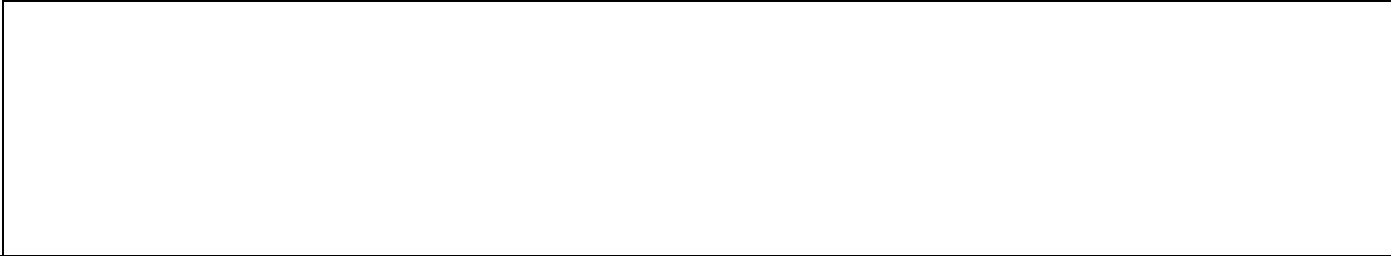
OES Regional map

Note: consultant was not provided this map on disk.

## Mutual Aid Systems

Several discipline specific mutual aid systems function within the California mutual aid regional framework. With the exception of disaster medical/health, all mutual aid systems are coordinated at the state level by the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES). OES coordinates all mutual aid through three independent networks or channels: Emergency Services, Fire and Rescue, and Law Enforcement.

Established mutual aid systems and their state level coordination authority are shown below.



## **Fire and Rescue**



## Urban Search and Rescue Mutual Aid System







<sup>1</sup>Systems currently under development

Several other mutual aid systems are being developed. Although some are in limited operations, state-wide procedures for their operation are not yet in effect. When fully operational, they will be coordinated by State OES through the emergency services coordination network or through specific disciplines.

Each of the statewide mutual aid systems may supply its own facilities, communications systems, operating procedures and personnel structure. In some cases, the personnel who operate the mutual aid systems at the regional level are elected and may be representatives of other state agencies, non-state agencies and/or the private sector.

## **B. OES Administrative Regions**

The OES Administrative Region serves as general coordinator and exchanges information with mutual aid regions and mutual aid systems that operate within the boundaries of the Administrative Region. OES has established three Administrative Regions: Coastal, Inland, Southern. As shown in Exhibit E-2, OES Administrative Regions will have common boundaries with one or more mutual aid regions.

OES Administrative Regions are used by State OES to maintain day-to-day contact with emergency services organizations at local, county and private sector levels. An OES Regional Administrator and support staff will function at an Administrative Region headquarters.

The OES Administrative Region is responsible to provide:

- General planning and preparedness assistance to jurisdictions within the mutual aid region(s)
- Emergency services mutual aid coordination for public works
- Emergency Managers Mutual Aid
- Coordination for other resources and support not included in other discipline specific mutual aid systems

The Region also assists in the coordination and monitoring of regional disaster recovery operations.

During an emergency, the regional coordination function for a discipline specific mutual aid system may function at a facility operated by the affected discipline for example, fire, law, or disaster medical/health. Coordination of other mutual aid will be done from within the OES Administrative Region Emergency Operations Center (REOC).

During emergencies, OES may establish additional regional coordination facilities within mutual aid regions. These facilities would be located near the scene of disasters or major incidents, and would be connected to an Administrative Region REOC.

## **2. SEMS Regional Guidelines**

Agencies which provide regional coordination of mutual aid and operate the various mutual aid systems within the state are required to use SEMS at the regional level.

When the OES Regional EOC (REOC) is activated, communications and coordination shall be established with:

- Operational areas within the region
- State level EOC
- Regional facilities responsible for discipline specific mutual aid systems
- OES coordinating facilities established near disaster scenes

Department operations centers (DOCs) of other state agencies located within the boundaries of the OES Administrative Region. The latter could include department operations centers which function as regional mutual aid system coordinators, (e.g., CDF) as well as state agency "regional" operations centers for CALTRANS Districts, CHP Divisions, etc.

Boundaries of state agency districts, divisions and regions may not correspond to those of the State's mutual aid regions.

## **3. Responsibilities and Roles of OES Regional EOCs**

### **Responsibilities**

Regional emergency operations centers (REOCs) when activated are responsible to:

- Ensure that an overall coordinating and information management system is in place for providing state support to local governments during an emergency. During emergencies, this is done by working through operational areas.
- Provide an organizational structure and the necessary communications to coordinate, and to provide information transfer between regional mutual aid systems which function in other state and non-state agencies and facilities.
- Facilitate communications and coordination between affected operational areas within the region.
- Provide the communications and coordination link between operational areas and the state level of SEMS.
- Ensure and encourage consistency of operations between state agencies and local governments through the utilization of SEMS.

## **Operational Role**

The Region EOC (REOC) performs and/or supports a variety of activities at the time of the emergency. REOC activities can be direct with operational areas, or be supportive by ensuring effective coordination through existing mutual aid systems. The operational role of the Regional EOC is to:

- Act as the State's primary point of contact for operational areas within the region
- Coordinate the regional response to disasters including collection, verification and evaluation of situation information and, for all resources dispatched through the Emergency Services Mutual Aid System, the allocation of available resources
- Coordinate mutual aid requests for emergency services within the region. (This includes the direct coordination of all mutual aid requests other than that provided through established discipline-specific systems such as the Disaster Medical, Law Enforcement, and Fire and Rescue Mutual Aid Systems)
- Maintain liaison and coordination with OES Headquarters, and with state and federal agencies within or outside the region as required
- Provide assistance to state and local agencies through appropriate systems to support the protection and saving of life and property during emergencies
- Assist local governments in beginning recovery operations following disasters
- Assist and guide local jurisdictions in all phases of emergency management
- Receive and disseminate emergency alerts and warnings

## **Purchasing Authority, Procurement Policy and Mission Numbers**

Once an emergency has been declared, purchasing and mission number assignment authority will be delegated to the appropriate OES Administrative Region (REOC). OES headquarters will establish the conditions under which authority will be delegated. The Regional Administrator (REOC Director) may delegate purchasing authority to the REOC Finance/Administration Section, and delegate mission number assignments to the Logistics Section.

During life-threatening or other time critical emergencies, resources will be procured from the closest available source(s). Unless otherwise defined by OES policy, in those situations where time is not of the essence, or life is not threatened, resources will be procured using the priority outlined below:

1. Resources within the State inventory, i.e., state owned
2. Other Sources that may be obtained without direct cost to the State (may include donated goods and services)

3. Resources that may be leased or purchased within spending authorizations

### **Information Transfer**

As the Regional EOC organization grows, effective internal information transfer must take place. Two principles are essential to effective handling.

- There is freedom within the organization to exchange information. Any person in any unit or organization may make contact with any other person to exchange information.
- Orders, directives, resource requests, and status changes must follow the REOC organization unless otherwise indicated in the REOC Action Plan.

## **4. Activating the Regional EOC (REOC)**

The REOC will be activated under any of the following conditions:

- When any operational area EOC in the region is activated
- When ordered by the Regional Administrator (or designee) or higher authority
- When a local or state emergency is declared, and contact with the OES Regional Administrator (or designee) is not immediately possible

The Region should anticipate the activation of the operational area(s) and activate the REOC as soon as practical. The Regional Administrator will maintain procedures for activating and staffing the REOC at levels appropriate to the situation. These procedures will be made available to the operational areas within the region. Representatives from the OES REOC will be sent as part of the activation process to activated operational area EOCs.

Upon activation, the Regional Administrator will assume the position of REOC Director, and have responsibility for all state related functional activity within the REOC. During later phases of an emergency, REOC Director authority may be delegated.

The REOC Director and all other emergency management level staff with the exception of the field liaison team(s) shall carry out their duties at the REOC location. (See REOC Plan and Standard Operating Procedures.)

Regions should establish levels of activation based on the kinds of events identified within a regional hazards assessment. Positions to be automatically activated for each level could then be designated.

Three levels of activation are recommended.

### Level One - Minimum

At a minimum, staffing would consist of the Regional Administrator and regional Duty Officer. Other members of the General Staff may also be part of this level of activation as could be a Situation Status and Analysis Unit from the Planning Section and a Communications Unit from the Logistics Section. If possible, An OES Agency Representative should be sent to the operational area that has experienced the emergency. If the situation is a prediction of a possible event, OES representatives should be alerted as part of the Level one activation.

### Level Two - Midlevel Activation

Most of the REOC functional elements are activated but a reduced staffing level. A Level Two activation would often be achieved through either an increase from Level One or a decrease from Level Three.

### Level Three - Full Activation

All functional elements are represented at full staffing. A level three activation may also include State and Federal declarations with appropriate Federal Emergency Support Function (ESF) representation at the REOC.

## 5. Regional EOC (REOC) Organization

### Organization Development

SEMS regulation (2403 (c)) require that the regional level provide for all of the following functions within a REOC.

- Management
- Operations
- Planning/Intelligence
- Logistics
- Finance/Administration

To meet this requirement, a regional level organizational structure has been established. The following are primary functional positions at the REOC. With the exception of the REOC Director, all positions will be activated as required.

- REOC Director (Regional Administrator)
- Public Information
- Liaison
- Operations Section
- Planning/Intelligence Section
- Logistics Section

- Finance/Administration Section

The public information function should be established at a section or branch level in the REOC to allow the capability for later activation of sub-elements within the function. It is recommended that Public Information and Liaison positions once activated, be added to the REOC General Staff.

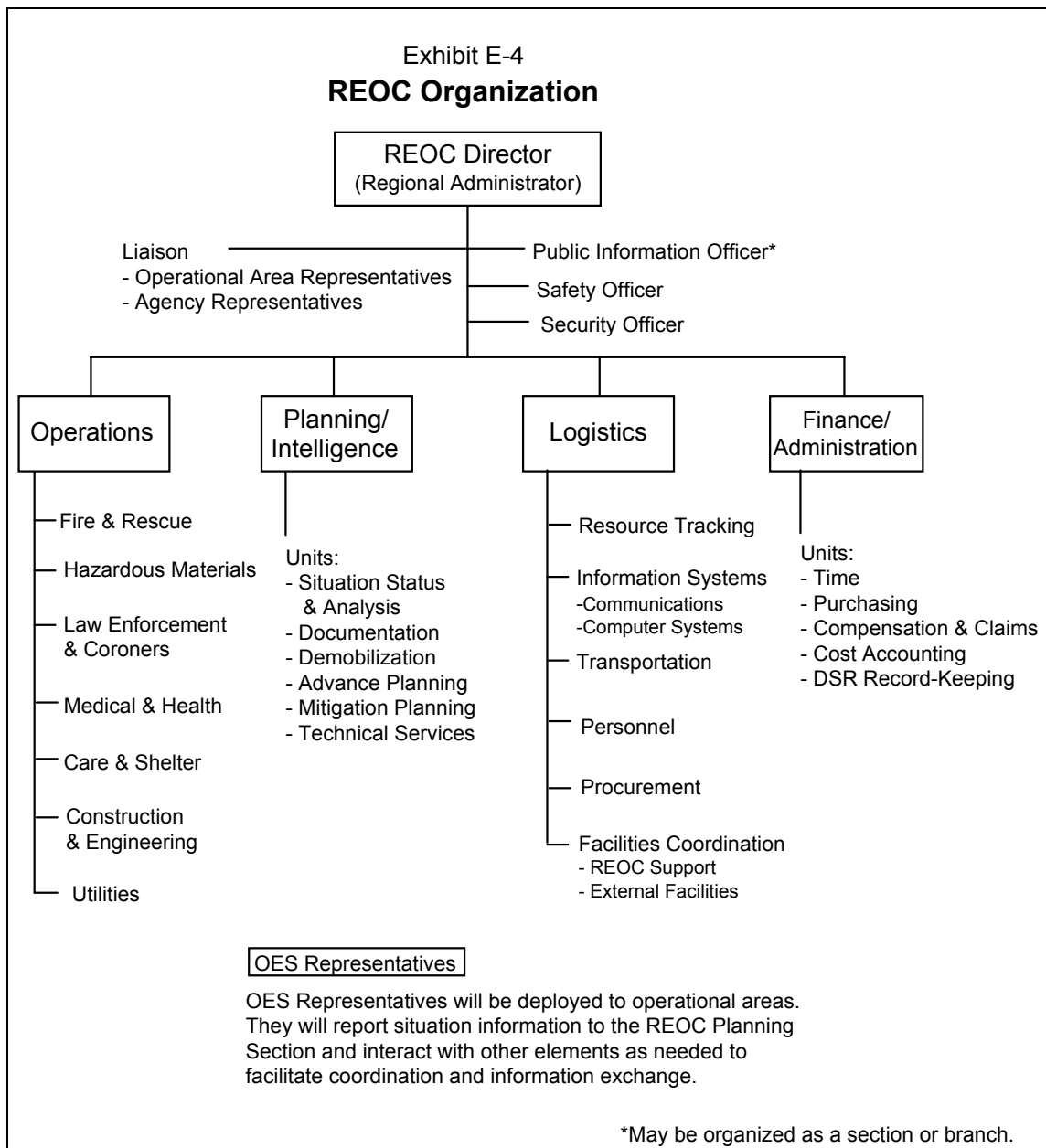
Primary functional responsibility includes the following:

- REOC Director (Management) - Implements policy of the OES Director and appropriate government code, and coordinates joint efforts of governmental agencies and public and private organizations functioning at the REOC.
- Operations Section - Coordinates the activities of various functional branches which may be activated at the REOC to support operational areas.
- Planning/Intelligence Section - Collects, evaluates, and disseminates information; develops the REOC action plan in coordination with the other functions, and maintains documentation.
- Logistics Section - Procures and provides facilities, services, personnel, equipment, and materials to meet the needs of operational area requests and to support REOC operations.
- Finance/Administration Section - Administers regional level purchasing authority, cost accounting and other financial activities and administrative tasks not assigned to other functions.
- Public Information - Develops regional level state public information releases, and coordinates public information and public affairs activities with the state EPI manager at the SOC.
- Liaison - Provides coordination, and ensures adequate support is provided to incoming operational area and other agency representatives. Liaison will also assist the REOC Director in coordinating the assignment of regional field liaison teams sent to operational areas and/or other locations as necessary.

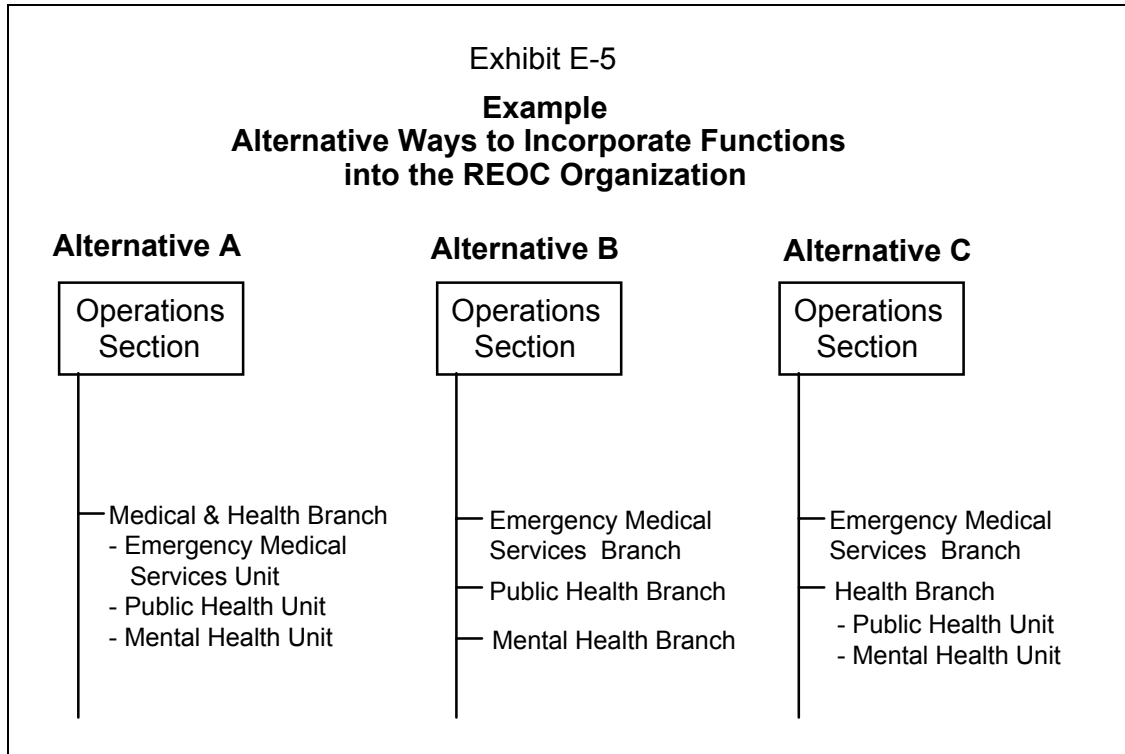
Section Chiefs constitute the REOC General Staff. The REOC Director and General Staff function as a REOC management team. If Liaison and Public Information functions are not established, the responsibility for those functions rests with the REOC Director.

All functions must be capable of being represented in the REOC. However, there is no requirement that all functional positions be activated. The only organizational position that would require activation at the regional level would be the REOC Director. The REOC Director is responsible for all primary and support functions until he/she delegates the authority to others.

A fully activated REOC organization is shown in Exhibit E-4.



Functions may be organized within the REOC organization in various ways as shown in Exhibit E-5.



## Organizational Span of Control

The Regional EOC organization will expand (or contract) as necessary to meet the operational requirement. The hierarchy of organizational elements that can be developed as needed within the EOC organization is:

- Director
  - Section
    - Branch
      - Group
        - Unit

Personnel supervising REOC Sections will carry the position title of Section Chief. The title of Coordinator will be used for other position levels unless otherwise designated.

The span-of-control within the Regional EOC organization should be maintained within the range of one supervisor for every three to seven positions. If the span of control exceeds seven, activation of another organizational level (e.g., Branch, Group or Unit) should be considered. Consideration should be given to deactivating or consolidating organizational elements if the span of control is less than three.

Not all positions in the organization need to be activated at the time of regional EOC activation. For example, a section does not have to be activated before activating a specific branch. Functional need and span of control are the primary considerations in organization development.

The next highest organizational level will perform the duties of functional positions not activated. One person may assume more than one functional assignment when necessary.

## **6. Regional EOC Staffing**

The OES Regional Administrator will determine appropriate staffing at the REOC for each activation level based upon assessment of the situation. REOC positions should be staffed by available individuals most qualified to perform the necessary function. Primary staff positions may be filled by individuals from other State agencies. Sub positions within the organization will be filled by qualified personnel independent of rank or agency affiliation.

It is recommended that staffing for full activation of the REOC should use pre designated State Inter-Agency Response Teams. Teams will operate on a rotating "on-call" basis. Team composition will be established within Regional operating plans. Teams and other supporting personnel may consist of personnel from the following sources.

- Primary OES Region
- Other OES Regions
- OES Headquarters
- Other State Agencies
- Emergency Managers Mutual Aid Responders
- Emergency Hires

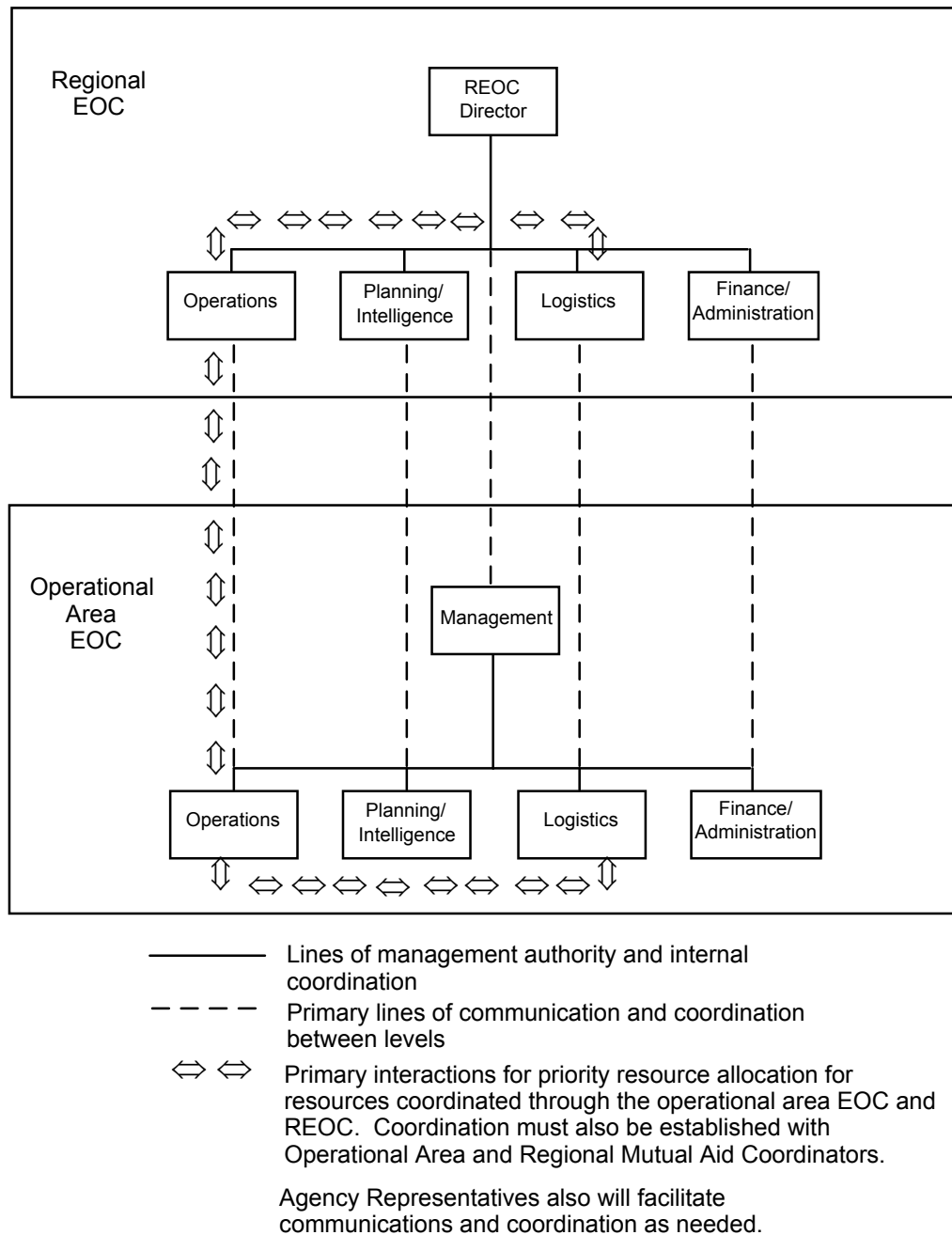
## **7. Coordination with the Operational Area**

Regional coordination with operational areas can take several forms:

- The REOC sends OES Agency Representatives to the operational area(s) (preferred method).
- Coordination is done through telecommunications systems (telephone, radio, OASIS Satellite).
- The operational area sends Agency liaison representatives to the REOC.

Coordination and communications between a REOC and an operational area EOC will be primarily along functional lines as illustrated in Exhibit E-6.

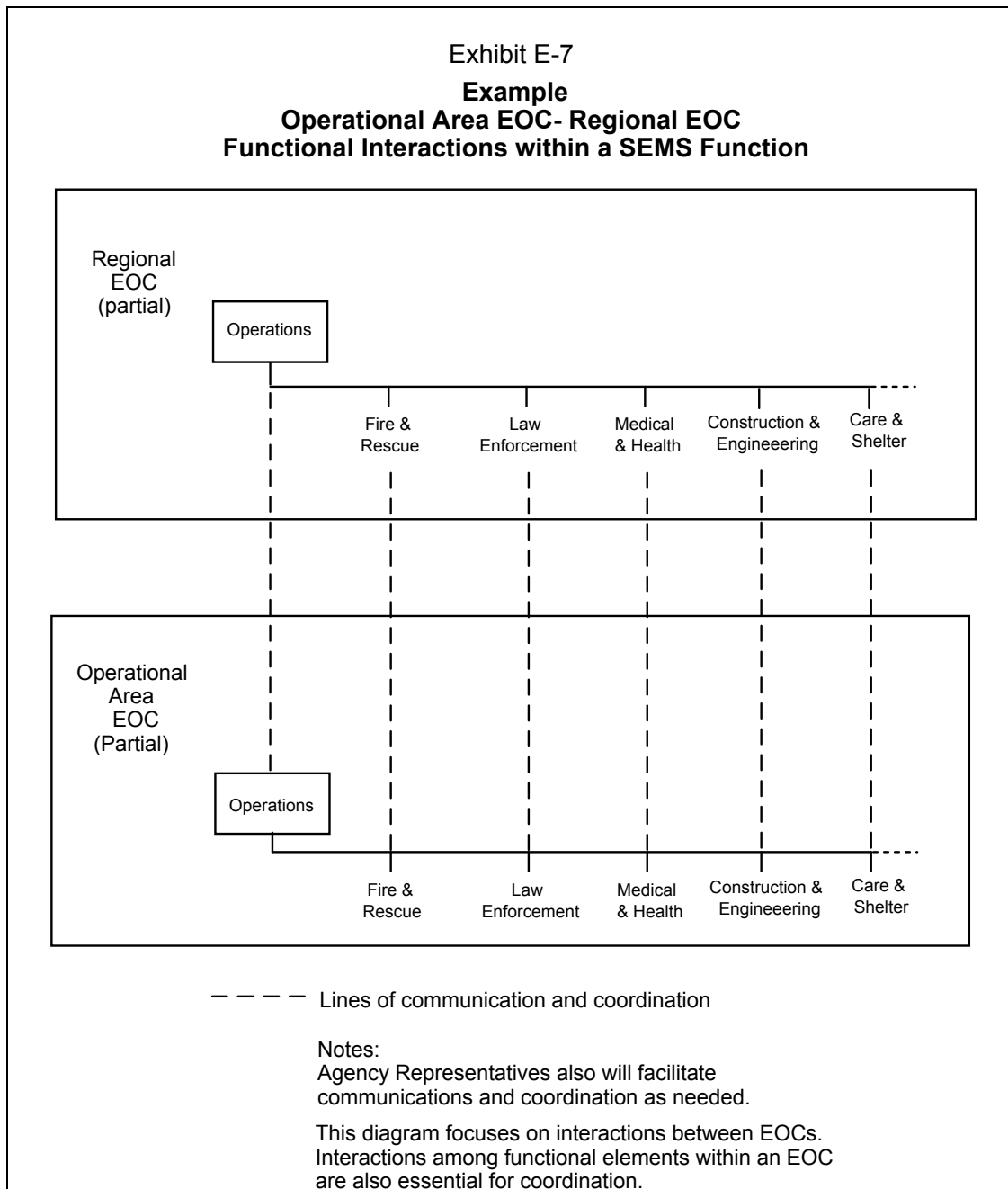
**Exhibit E-6**  
**Operational Area EOC - Regional EOC**  
**Primary Interactions**



Coordination and communications will occur between the five SEMS functions at the operational area level and their counterparts at the regional level. Coordination of resource requests should be done in accordance with agency policy. This requires close communications and coordination between the operations and logistics functions at both the local government and operational area levels. This relationship is vital

particularly when there are multiple requests for similar resources or when resources are scarce.

In addition, coordination and communication may occur between organizational elements under a SEMS function and counterpart elements at the other level as illustrated in Exhibit E-7.



The REOC OES Agency Representative assigned to the operational area assumes an information and coordination role to ensure effective communication is taking place between functional elements. Agency Representatives do not replace or perform roles

assigned to functional elements.

## **8. Coordination and Communication with Established Mutual Aid System Regional Coordinators**

Several of the established mutual aid systems function from within their own discipline-specific facilities and communications networks. Therefore, the coordination at the regional level can take place in three ways.

- REOC and other regional mutual aid coordinators exchange information as required but are not located together at the same REOC.
- Mutual Aid Systems send liaison representatives to the REOC. This assures a closer working relationship.
- Mutual aid coordination is centralized at the REOC with functional branches established for some mutual aid coordination.

The modes of interaction between the REOC and mutual aid coordinators are shown in Exhibit E-8.

There is no directive mandating which mode of operation will be carried out at the time of an emergency. Maintaining close coordination with established mutual aid systems is an essential requirement at the REOC. All discipline specific mutual aid systems which are not functioning from within the REOC have a responsibility to ensure that the REOC is fully informed on all matters regarding mutual aid operations. The best mode of operation should be determined by an agreement between the REOC Director and the Regional Mutual Aid Coordinator(s). In major disasters, mutual aid systems should have representatives at the REOC to facilitate coordination and information flow.

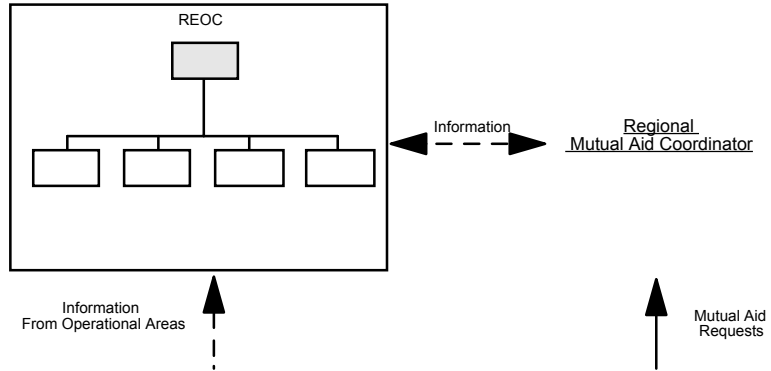
Resource requests beyond the normal inventory of an agency, or outside the resources within the inventory of an established mutual aid system, will be routed to the REOC Logistics Section for processing and order placement. Following this procedure reduces the possibility of duplicate orders, consolidates orders at a central order point, and effectively manages costs of the procurement process. A Resource Tracking function within the Logistics Section will monitor the resource ordering and distribution process.

Exhibit E-8  
**Concept of  
 REOC and Discipline-Specific Mutual Aid System  
 Relationships**

**Mode of  
 Interaction**

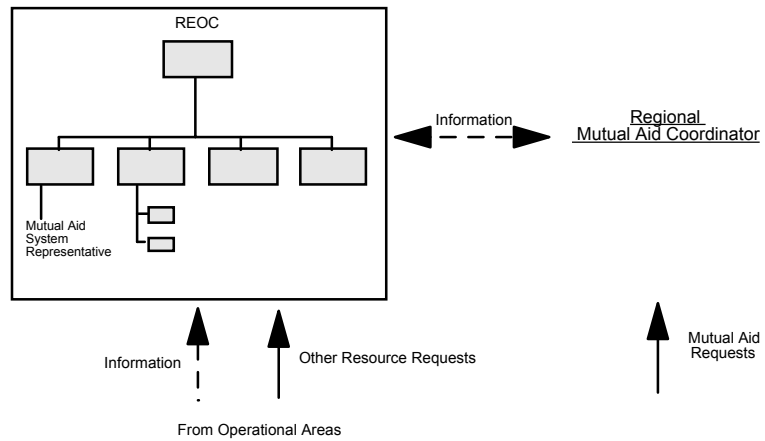
Monitoring

REOC and Regional  
 Mutual Aid Coordinators  
 exchange information



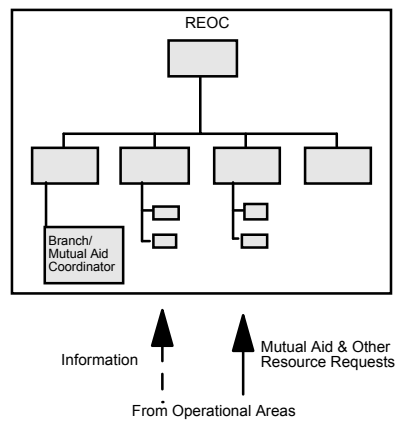
Decentralized  
 Mutual Aid Coordination

Liaison Representative  
 for Mutual Aid System  
 at REOC



Centralized  
 Mutual Aid Coordination

Regional Mutual Aid Coordinator  
 is Branch Coordinator or  
 is located in branch



(Note: Some Mutual Aid Systems may remain in decentralized mode with REOC while others are in centralized mode.)

## **9. Coordination with the State Level**

Response coordination with mutual aid regions and operational areas will be maintained at the State OES Regional Emergency Operations Center (REOC ) level whenever possible.

The State Operations Center (SOC) will ensure that all state and regional elements of the State's Standardized Emergency Management System are activated as the emergency situation requires, and are maintained at the level necessary for the response. The SOC will function as the state's initial response entity until the appropriate REOCs can be activated and assume local management of their operational response functions.

The state level will have an overall coordination role with REOCs in the event of simultaneous multi-regional disasters such as earthquakes, fires or floods. In this situation, the SOC will provide inter-regional policy direction and coordination for emergencies involving more than one REOC activation. The SOC will monitor and facilitate inter-regional communications and coordination issues.

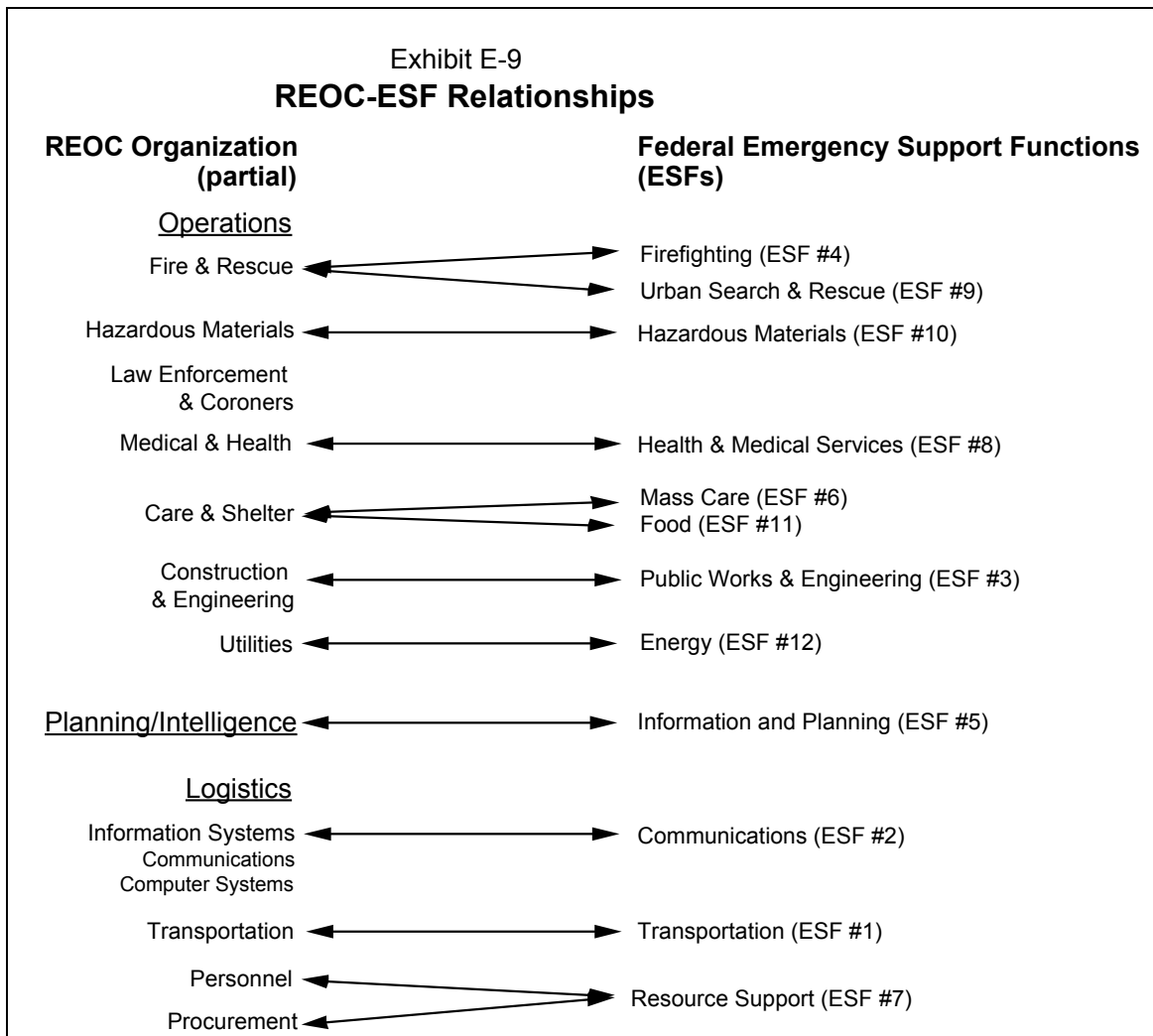
The REOC will prepare regional Situation Reports, and forward these to the SOC. The SOC will compile, authenticate, and provide summary disaster status information obtained from all sources, in the form of Situation Reports, to the Governor's office, the legislature, state agency headquarters, media, and others as appropriate.

## **10. State Regional and Federal Interactions**

The REOC is the primary point of contact within SEMS for operational areas to communicate information and to request resources from the State. The REOC must be immediately able to respond to operational area requests. In some instances, joint State-Federal interaction will be necessary. This interaction is best accomplished by State and Federal counterparts working together at the same location.

In the event of a Federal Disaster Declaration, FEMA Emergency Support Functions (ESF) plan to be represented in the REOC. The same State and Federal functional elements should work closely together at the same location and in a combined functional environment. for example, State Planning /Intelligence and Federal information and planning functions have demonstrated the need for combined operation.

REOC and FEMA Response Plan ESF relationships are shown in Exhibit E-9.



## 11. Multi-agency or Inter-agency Coordination at the Regional Level

Multi-agency or Inter-agency coordination is an integral part of both the REOC organization and the procedures which function within the REOC. The REOC General Staff will serve as the primary group responsible for development of REOC Action Plans, and be a member of any multi-agency or inter-agency coordination group.

The REOC Director may convene meetings of personnel needed for multi or inter agency coordination purposes. The meetings can be at the General Staff, section or branch level and include other agencies. Subject areas and discussion issues will determine the participants.

An ad-hoc task force may also be used as an effective application of multi-agency or inter-agency coordination to solve specific problems. The REOC Director would

assign key personnel from various functional areas or disciplines to work together on the task force.

## **12. Action Planning at the REOC level.**

Action planning at the REOC, is based around an operational period. The length of the operational period is determined by first establishing a set of objectives and priority actions that must be performed. A reasonable time frame for accomplishing those actions is then established. The actions requiring the longest time period generally will define the length of the operational period. Typically, operational periods at the beginning of an emergency are short, sometimes only a few hours. As the emergency progresses, operational periods may be longer, but should not exceed twenty-four hours.

The Initial REOC Action Plan may be a verbal plan put together in the first hour after EOC activation. It is usually prepared by the REOC Director and the General Staff. Subsequent plans should be in writing, and follow an established format.

REOC action planning need not be a complex process. The Action Plan should generally cover the following elements:

1. Operational Period Designation - (The time frame within which the action plan will be in effect)
2. Statement of current priorities
3. Listing of objectives to be accomplished (should address the priorities and be measurable in some way)
4. Statement of strategy to achieve the objectives. (Identify if there is more than one way to accomplish the objective, and which method is preferred.)
5. Assignments necessary to implement the strategy
6. Organizational elements to be activated to support the assignments (Also may list organizational elements that will be deactivated during or at the end of the period.)
7. Logistical or other technical support required

A more detailed discussion of Action Planning is covered in Guidelines Part III Supporting Documentation. Action Planning is also covered in more detail in the EOC Level Training Course.

### **13. Role of the Operational Area Satellite System (OASIS) at the Region**

The Operational Area Satellite Information System (OASIS) is a satellite based communications system with a high frequency radio backup. OASIS provides the capability to rapidly transfer a wide variety of information reports between OASIS user agencies. In SEMS, OASIS can be viewed as both a communications network and information dissemination system linking three of the five SEMS organizational levels.

OASIS will be a primary method of communications within SEMS. OASIS Users include, OES State Headquarters, OES Regions and all State operational areas. The intent of OASIS is to provide disaster-proof communications between the operational areas, state OES Regions, OES Headquarters and mobile state telecommunications units. The communications component of OASIS does not extend into the local government level of SEMS. However local governments are encouraged to use OASIS forms in passing status, situation reports and resource requests to the operational area.

The communications components to the system include a satellite system in each county operational area linked to selected state, federal and local agencies. OASIS provides voice lines as well as data. OASIS also includes a high frequency radio back-up system between selected facilities.

The information processing component of OASIS contains fifteen different functional forms which when fully implemented into OASIS system software, will provide a rapid and accurate means of transferring information between locations on the OASIS network.